

CONGRATULATING THE COUNCIL OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS ON THEIR BEING HONORED BY LEADERSHIP WILKES-BARRE FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP EXAMPLE

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the Council of Presidents from the Wyoming Valley's five institutions of higher education that includes King's College, Wilkes University, College Misericordia, Penn State University and the Luzerne County Community College.

In the mid 1980s, the presidents of these five institutions came together upon realizing that although they compete for students and funding, they are also an invaluable resource to the greater community in which they are located. That realization prompted the formation of the Council of Presidents as a vehicle to promote cooperation and sharing of common goals in a manner that maximizes the effort involved.

Since then, the Council of Presidents has been a positive force in downtown Wilkes-Barre economic development efforts, the formation of the Diamond City Partnership, the Wilkes-Barre Innovation Center, the Great Valley Technology Alliance, City Vest and the Joint Urban Studies Center, to name just a few of their accomplishments.

The Council of Presidents stands as a beacon that focuses a bright light on the positive things that can be achieved through cooperative action. Not only has their outstanding leadership and example proven to be a blueprint for success in the community arena, it has also paid vast dividends to each of the schools the presidents represent.

Cooperation in designing and developing academic course offerings has benefited from the Council of Presidents and their foresight and collective zeal to improve educational opportunities for all students attending their respective institutions.

The Council of Presidents has been especially sensitive to changing elements in society and has responded promptly and efficiently to meet those challenges. The Council of Presidents has worked cooperatively to consolidate Spanish language development to accommodate a growing Hispanic population in the region.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Council of Presidents on this notable occasion. The people of the greater Wyoming Valley are better served because of the work accomplished by this dedicated group of men and women. And their cooperative example should serve as a model for other groups, both public and private, who seek to provide a higher level of service in the performance of their duties.

TRIBUTE TO KATHERINE
McMONAGLE

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor and to recognize Katherine McMonagle—a devoted educator and a life-long learner. Katherine has announced her plans to retire after thirty-four year of service.

Katherine has dedicated her professional career to thousands of students in the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale school district, located in Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District. From Carver Elementary School to North Saint Paul High School, Kathie has been an inspiring teacher to her students and a caring mentor to her colleagues.

In her first year as a teacher she taught physical education to elementary students and for the following eight years she continued in this subject area and taught middle schoolers the benefits of physical activity. As her portfolio changed to include health studies over 20 years ago, she became committed to helping students learn about the dangers of smoking and helping student smokers to quit.

In fact, she developed a program in conjunction with the Ramsey County chapter of the American Lung Association and her high school. A few years later her idea expanded to include a district-wide K-12 program committed to smoking prevention. Her idea continued to grow as the Lung Association started to move the program to other school districts.

And her ideas and commitment didn't stop there. Kathie also developed and implemented a service learning course where high school students—freshmen through seniors—work with communities to identify and address a need and develop a plan to solve the problem. The students use marketing, communication, math and other skills to come up with an implementation plan. This kind of creativity and innovation in curriculum is admired and supported not only by the students, but also by their parents, the communities, and other teachers who participate.

Kathie's skill and determination to create new and exciting opportunities for students is a consistent theme in her esteemed teaching career. She ensured that her school district would not be the only one to not provide a competitive golf team for girls. She also started up the high school's Knowledge and Quiz bowl teams and she's been their coach for the past eight years.

Over the course of Katherine's career, she has grown and developed confidence, grace, and skill in working with teenagers about personal health and development issues—which can be difficult subjects to broach with teens. Her desire to bring out the best in people and to encourage them to find new ways to lead healthy, successful, and enriching lives echoes through her work and will have a lasting impact on all those lucky enough to have been her student. She has encouraged mutual respect, honesty, and integrity in the classroom—important attributes that students have taken with them.

It is with respect and thanks that I rise to salute a teacher who will be missed, and whose legacy and ideas will continue long

after she says her goodbyes to her students and colleagues.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE FEDERAL
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE G.
THOMAS VANBEBBER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and career of Federal District Court Judge for the District of Kansas G. Thomas VanBebber, who died on May 26th.

U.S. District Judge G. Thomas VanBebber, 73, died unexpectedly and peacefully at home in Overland Park, Kansas. He was born to Roy VanBebber and Anne Wenner VanBebber in 1931 and grew up in Troy, Kansas, where he established a law practice after his graduation from the University of Kansas and its School of Law in 1955. There, he was a member of the editorial board of the Law Review and was a member of the Order of the Coif. He served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Kansas for 2 years, and he was the Doniphan County, Kansas, Attorney for 6 years as he established a 25-year private practice in Troy. Before he entered the judiciary, Judge VanBebber was active in politics and was Chairman of the Doniphan County Republican Central Committee. He served 2 terms in the Kansas House of Representatives before being appointed chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission, the state's utility regulatory agency, by Governor Robert Bennett. Among his memberships was tenure as a Director of the Kansas State Historical Society. In 1982, he was appointed U.S. Magistrate Judge for the District of Kansas, in Topeka, and he was appointed as U.S. District Judge for the District of Kansas in 1989. He sat in Kansas City, Kansas, and became Chief District Judge in April 1995, a position he held until he elected to assume Senior Judge status in December 2000. He had continued to carry an active workload of federal cases until his death.

Judge VanBebber was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Virginia Anne Henry. He leaves his wife, Alleen, at home; and his stepson, David Castellani, of Los Angeles, California. He also leaves his brother, John Gregory, and his wife, Vondell; his brother, William and his wife, Yvonne; his brother-in-law Ward Henry, and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and cousins. I have known Alleen and the Judge for many years. They are wonderful people. We all will miss Tom VanBebber.

On May 28th, the Lawrence Journal-World carried an article reviewing the notable moments of Judge VanBebber's judicial career. I include it with this statement and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to pay tribute to a jurist who was described in the Kansas City Star as a man who "forged a legal career that defines the principles of fairness, courage and intelligence . . . He was known for his gregarious warmth outside the courtroom, but when he put on the black robe he was all business and expected litigants to have the same attitude."

[The Lawrence Journal-World, May 27, 2005]

FEDERAL JUDGE VANBEBBER DIES AT 73

RULINGS INCLUDED OKC BOMB CASE, SOUTH LAWRENCE TRAFFICWAY, PHELPS

U.S. District Court Judge G. Thomas VanBebber died Thursday. He was 73.

"He was an indomitable spirit . . . a wonderful judge," said Steve McAllister, dean of the Kansas University School of Law.

VanBebber, who lived in Overland Park, called in sick Wednesday.

"He died peacefully in his sleep, sometime between 6 and 6:30 a.m.," said Ralph DeLoach, clerk/administrator for the U.S. District Court of Kansas.

"He was respected not only by his peers, but by all court staff who worked for him—highly respected," DeLoach said.

VanBebber was perhaps best known for sentencing Michael Fortier, a key witness for the prosecution in the Oklahoma City bombing trial that led to convictions of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

Fortier admitted knowing about the plot to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and choosing not to warn authorities.

VanBebber sentenced Fortier to 12 years in prison and ordered him to pay \$200,000 in fines.

Fortier's attorneys appealed the sentence, arguing it was excessive given his cooperation with prosecutors. A federal appeals court upheld the sentence.

Other VanBebber rulings:

1997—Issued an injunction halting work on the proposed South Lawrence Trafficway until after completion of an environmental impact statement.

1999—Denied the Rev. Fred Phelps' attempt to sue Shawnee County Dist. Atty. Joan Hamilton for allegedly prosecuting him in an attempt to limit his anti-homosexual picketing.

2004—Denied an attempt to force Washburn University to remove a statue from campus that some considered anti-Catholic.

The sculpture, entitled "Holier Than Thou," depicted a scowling, heavyset clergyman wearing ceremonial headgear that some said was shaped like a penis.

"The court cannot conclude that a reasonable observer would perceive the university's display of 'Holier Than Thou' as an attack on Catholics," VanBebber wrote in his ruling.

VanBebber grew up in Troy, Kan. (population 1,000). He earned a bachelor's degree from Kansas University in 1953; a law degree in 1955. In 2001, he received the KU Law Society's distinguished alumnus award.

He practiced law in Troy until 1959, when he became an assistant U.S. attorney. He returned to private practice in Troy in 1961, serving as Doniphan County attorney from 1963 to 1969. He was elected to the Kansas House, serving one term from 1973 to 1975.

He served on the Kansas Corporation Commission, from 1975 to 1979.

VanBebber was appointed a federal magistrate in 1982. Seven years later, he was appointed to the federal bench by President George H. W. Bush.

He served as chief judge from 1995 to 2000, assuming senior judge status on Dec. 31, 2000.

"He was a wonderful judge and an even better person," said U.S. Chief Judge John W. Lungstrum, who lives in Lawrence.

"He was a great student of history and literature," he said. "He had a tendency to relate to anecdotes and people he knew while growing up in Troy—I say that not to imply that he was homespun in character; I say it because he related to small-town values in a way that brought a lot of wisdom and common sense to the bench. He was truly brilliant."

Lungstrum succeeded VanBebber as the federal court's chief judge in Kansas.

As a child, VanBebber contracted polio and often relied on crutches and, in recent years, a wheelchair.

"He was in pain every day, but he never let on that there was a problem," Lungstrum said. "His courage and stoicism were tremendously inspirational to the court."

VanBebber is survived by his wife, Alleen, an attorney.

CONFERENCE ON THE DEEPENING CRISIS FOR HAITIANS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for an important conference taking place today—the Conference on the Deepening Crisis for Haitians. This conference will bring together members of the Haitian American community, the academic sector, non-governmental organizations, and representatives from the U.S. and Haitian governments to discuss key issues facing Haitians.

While Haiti has recently celebrated more than 200 years of independence from French colonial rule, the citizens of the island remain vulnerable to poverty, poor health, and political chaos. Tumultuous events in the past year and a half consisted of violent uprisings, the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, massive floods in May displacing tens of thousands, and Tropical Storm Jeanne in September leading to more than 3,000 deaths in the ensuing floods. Sadly, Haiti has not been able to recover from these recent disasters and many Haitians are living in terrible conditions. This is why I have urged Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff to grant Temporary Protected Status to Haitian nationals living in the United States. With thousands of people killed in the natural disasters and hundreds of thousands left homeless, Haiti is temporarily unable to handle the return of nationals. Haitians already in the U.S. should be allowed to remain in peace and security in the U.S. while the island recovers.

Today, the Organization of American States General Assembly is meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Organization's Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza, has pledged to raise the subject of Haiti at the OAS during the session. While this is a welcome sign, it is the least of what will be needed if Haiti is to emerge from its deepening crisis. The international community and the United States must get serious about finding a way out of the expanding abyss so that Haiti can once again move forward.

We all would like to see a brighter future for Haiti, and I hope this conference will serve to explore many views. Respect for human rights, freedom, and the rule of law must be established in the poorest nation in our hemisphere. Our Haitian constituents and their relatives are counting on us to help bring Haiti out of its volatile situation. I am pleased to support the Conference on the Deepening Crisis for Haitians, and I commend the Conference for hosting this dialogue.

A TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH J. COLEMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE NEW YORK STATE TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth J. Coleman, who has dedicated her life to the fight for civil rights, and has broken down numerous barriers along the way. Ms. Coleman's legal career has focused on ensuring access for all Americans to a fair and unbiased justice system, one through which they can realize the entirety of their constitutional rights. This principle has guided her throughout her years of service, from work on behalf of indigent consumers in Georgia to her national work for the Anti-Defamation League, and most recently during her stint at the New York State Trial Lawyers Association (NYSTLA), where she was an outstanding Executive Director and General Counsel.

Ms. Coleman has also held many additional posts and has been involved in many endeavors over the years. She was elected Chair of the Board of the National Women's Law Center in 1996 and served in that capacity until 2003. President Clinton appointed Ms. Coleman Vice-Chair of the President's Export Council in 1994 and a United States Delegate to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995. More recently, the National Organization for Women's New York City chapter honored her in 2003 as a Woman of Power and Courage. Last year she was honored by New York Women's Agenda as a STAR, an honor bestowed upon women who represent the spirit of New York, provide leadership in business and in the community, and are role models for other women. I can think of no more worthy recipient of such recognition than Ms. Coleman.

As Elizabeth Coleman leaves NYSTLA, she embarks on a new mission, but one with the same goals in mind. She will continue her advocacy for civil and social justice through foundation work and community organizing. As she begins the next chapter of her life, I thank her wholeheartedly for her tireless work, and I wish her the very best in the years to come.

HONORING MAYOR EULINE BROCK

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service and commitment of Mayor Euline Brock. Ms. Brock has established herself as a leader and true servant to my hometown Denton, Texas.

Mayor Brock was recently presented the William J. Pitstick Regional Cooperation Award from the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The award recognizes individuals who have promoted good, strong leadership and spirit of regionalism in solving multi-jurisdictional problems.

Since first elected Denton's mayor in 2000, Mayor Brock has become a lead spokesman